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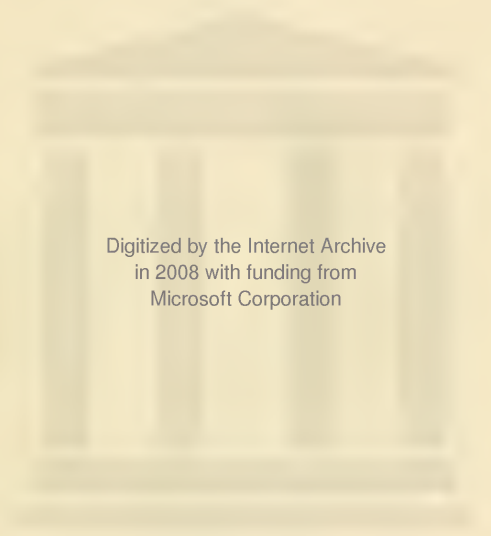












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"Are you the school-master, my good friend?"—Page 10.



O.  
JOHN F. OBERLIN,

PASTOR OF

THE BAN DE LA ROCHE.



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# JOHN F. OBERLIN,

PASTOR OF THE BAN DE LA ROCHE.

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## CHAPTER I.

THE BAN AND THOSE WHO DWELT THERE.

ABOUT an hour before daybreak, on the morning of the 24th of August, 1572, the young king of France, Charles IX., accompanied by the queen-mother, Catherine de Medicis, and the Duke of Anjou, left his private apartments—where during the whole night he had been in close conference with the Guises and other chiefs of the Roman Catholic nobility—and ascended to an open balcony of the Louvre, which commanded a view of the streets around. All was hushed in silence. The city slept below them. No sound broke the still-



ness save the footfall of the sentinels as they paced their rounds, or the murmur of the river which at intervals came floating by upon the night wind. Not a word was spoken by the party as they sat. Some solemn mystery seemed to have chained their utterance. The queen-mother watched the king, with compressed lips, and a calm, determined air. In Charles's bosom a dreadful struggle was evidently going on, for a livid paleness overspread his countenance, as he repeatedly rose from his seat and looked toward the east, or stooped to listen as if in expectation of hearing some signal from the street below, while at the same time his frame trembled, and the perspiration stood like beads upon his forehead.

The hour passed away. The east began to redden with the dawn of the Sabbath. The great bell of St. Germain l'Auxerrois tolled out the call to matins, and thus announced the day of St. Bartholomew. The sound of the bell had scarcely ceased, when the city, so lately wrapped in darkness and silence, seemed



filled with the glare of torches and the hum of assembling multitudes. The drums beat to arms; and the royal troops, mingled with crowds of armed citizens, poured into the streets, and surrounded the houses of both rich and poor, who were either known or suspected to profess or favour Protestant opinions. The dwellings of the Huguenot leaders were first assaulted, and Admiral Coligny, Francis de la Rochefoucault, Beauvais, and several other distinguished persons—who had been induced to come to Paris by the king to witness the marriage of his sister Margaret—were almost simultaneously assassinated. The Dukes of Montpensier, Aumale, and Marshal Tavannes, aided by several ecclesiastics, led on the now infuriated mob with cries of “Slay the Huguenots!” “Kill the heretics!” “The game is ensnared!” “The king desires every man of them to be destroyed;” a statement which Charles himself testified to be true by firing from the balcony upon the unhappy creatures who were fleeing from their murderers, and by hallooing on his soldiery with cries



of "Kill! kill!" Never did the sun rise on such a scene of blood as it shone upon on that Sabbath morning. The streets of Paris were literally washed with the gore of those whose only crime was attachment to the word of God. The innocence of childhood, and the white hairs of age were alike disregarded in the carnage. Persons of both sexes and of every age and condition were murdered without mercy. The infant was stabbed on the breast of the mother; the sick, the sleeping, parent and child, servant and master, were indiscriminately slaughtered. The massacre continued for several days, during which time, according to Perefixe, more than twenty seigneurs de marque, twelve hundred gentlemen, and from three to four thousand tradesmen and servants, were savagely butchered.

Not satisfied with having drenched his capital with the blood of his subjects, the king issued commands to the governors of the provinces to hunt down and exterminate the Huguenots within their reach. The mandate was willingly obeyed; and in Bourges, in Lyons,



in Toulouse, in Orleans, and in several other places, the horrors of the metropolis were re-enacted. These appalling transactions struck terror to the hearts of such of the Reformed as had escaped the slaughter. Some of them fled to Rochelle and Sancerre which they fortified. Others escaped to England, to Switzerland, to Germany, to the fastnesses of the Vosges, and of other ranges of mountains near the basin of the Rhine, and not a few of them, we believe, sought shelter from persecution and freedom to worship God in the wild, sterile district called the Ban de la Roche.

The "Ban," or district, derives its name from the neighbouring castle of La Roche. The Germans call the Ban "Steinthal," or the valley of stone. Formerly it was part of the province of Alsace, in the north-east of France, and is situated on the western slope of the Champ de Feu, an isolated range of mountains of volcanic origin—as the name implies—separated by a deep valley from the eastern chain of the Vosges. The Ban contains only two parishes—one called Rothau;



the other comprises the hamlets of Waldbach, Zelbach, Belmont, Bellefosse, and Foudai, inhabited almost exclusively by Lutherans. Waldbach, which lies nearly in the centre of these hamlets, is about eighteen hundred feet above the level of the sea ; and four hundred feet below Waldbach, on the mountain-side, stands Rothau. The two parishes contain about nine thousand acres, the sterility of which may be judged from the fact, that, even at present, little more than fifteen hundred are capable of cultivation. Here, defended by the mountain torrent and precipice, did the children of the Reformation expect to enjoy freedom to worship God, but they were disappointed. Wave after wave of persecution broke upon them during the thirty years' war in the reign of Louis XIV., which so desolated the Ban as to render it almost incapable of affording sustenance to any human being. Nevertheless, about eighty or a hundred families, destitute of all the necessities of civilized life, and shut out from intercourse with the inhabitants of the neighbouring districts, in con-



sequence of the want of roads, here continued to drag on a most wretched and miserable existence. At length the province of Alsace was united to France, one of the stipulations of the decree of union being that its inhabitants should be permitted to possess that pearl of price, *liberty of conscience*. Whether in this arrangement Louis the Great was influenced by the numerical strength of the Lutherans in the province, or by his recognition of a claim which is the birthright of every man, we shall not pause to inquire. Suffice it to say, that the decree brought no change to the moral or physical condition of the poor dwellers in the "valley of stone." Persecution had nearly consummated its fiendish work. It is true that some of the forms of religion were preserved among them, that they said they were of the Reformed faith; but why or wherefore, in 1750, they scarcely knew. About that period, a devout and earnest clergyman, moved by their wretched state, undertook the charge of the Ban. His name was Stouber. When he entered on his *cure*, he



was desirous to know what was the state of education in the district, and, on inquiring for the principal school, to his astonishment he was conducted to a miserable hovel, in one corner of which lay a helpless old man on a truckle bed, and around him were grouped a crowd of ill-clad, noisy, wild-looking children.

"Are you the schoolmaster, my good friend?" said Stouber to the old man.

"Yes, sir."

"And what do you teach the children?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Nothing! How is that?"

"Because," replied the old man, with genuine simplicity, "I know nothing myself."

"Why, then, were you appointed schoolmaster?"

"Why, sir, I had been taking care of the Waldbach pigs, and when I got too old and infirm for that employment, I was sent here to take care of the children!"

Stouber found the schools of the other villages in a similar condition; and Herr Kraft—whose interesting little work, "Aus Ober-



lin's Leben," we should like to see widely circulated in this country—shows that nothing could be more deplorably wretched than the ignorance of the masters, who, for the most part, were swineherds and shepherds ! During the months of summer, they ranged the hills with their flocks, but in winter they were transformed into "dominies," without any qualification for their office, but a most laudable stock of good intentions, which led them to attempt to teach the children what they themselves could not understand ; for the language of the Ban is a *patois*, evidently the old dialecte of Lorraine. When, therefore, they taught their charge to read a French or German elementary work, or a fragment of a French Bible, they were wholly incapable of explaining the sense or of giving the correct pronunciation !

A man of less ardent piety and determined resolution than M. Stouber would have departed from the Ban in hopeless despair of ever being able to bring about a revolution in the condition of its wretched inhabitants ; but



he was rich in faith. For fourteen years this accomplished man, aided by his beloved wife, whose remains repose in the churchyard of Waldbach, laboured unceasingly to effect the object which lay next his heart, by establishing schools, by circulating as many copies of the Scriptures as his poverty would allow him to obtain, by assiduous pastoral visitation, and by the faithful preaching of the gospel of Christ. Soon after the death of his wife, Stouber was appointed to the pastorate of St. Thomas', in Strasburg; but before he entered his new sphere of labour, he was anxious to see the Ban provided with a man "like-minded" as himself. He knew this was no easy matter to accomplish, for the difficulties in that isolated place were numerous, while the income was extremely small. The parish had no attractions for the lovers of purple and fine linen—for such as would look more carefully after the *fleece* than the flock. The man who came there, Stouber knew, must make up his mind to "endure hardness," to suffer privation, to be cut off from all intercourse with



the educated, and to devote himself wholly to the instruction of the poor and the wretched. Consequently he feared lest he should find it impossible to obtain any one who would be willing to take charge of the parish ; and this grieved him the more, as his own health was so completely shattered as to forbid his continuance. He, however, commenced his inquiries. What the issue was, we shall show in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER II.

IN 1740, at the gymnasium of Strasburg, a man of very considerable classical attainments, named Oberlin, held the office of tutor. Like most of his order "in all places everywhere," he had a small stipend and a large family. His wife was an amiable and an accomplished woman. Both were devout followers of the Redeemer, and it was their leading desire to train up their children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." They had seven sons and two daughters. Theirs was a joyous household. If you visited Madame Oberlin in the evening of almost any day in the year, you would have found her seated in the midst of her children, correcting their drawings, or reading aloud to them some interesting and instructive book. Thus her evenings were



spent, and when the hour for retiring to rest came, there was generally a united request for "one beautiful hymn from dear mamma!" When that mother's voice was no longer heard upon the earth, and the long, green grass grew thick upon her grave, those evening hymns were remembered and their influence felt.

Like Wilberforce, and as every father should be, so tutor Oberlin was the playfellow as well as the instructor of his children. In the vicinity of Strasburg, at a place named Schiltigheim, he had a few acres of land, and there, once a week, during the summer, the villagers would see him, with an old drum slung across his shoulder, acting as drill sergeant and drummer at the same time to his lads, whom he put through the military evolutions, with which he was well acquainted.

One of the boys, John Frederic, in consequence of this "playing at soldiers," became passionately attached to the military profession. Tales and histories of battles were eagerly sought after, and as eagerly read by him. The officers of the troops quartered in



the city were known to his family, and, being aware of the predilection which he had formed, and astonished at the acquaintance with military science which he displayed, granted his request to be permitted to join the soldiers when at exercise. The glitter and excitement of the parade filled the boy's mind. He, like most of his age, did not interpret the word "soldier." Its import was hidden from him, or his gentle, sensitive nature would have shrunk from it with loathing and disgust. He looked upon the troops, as they marched before him, with their gay clothing, and glistening weapons, and emblazoned banners; he heard their regular tread and thrilling music; but to him it was all *only* a splendid summer-day pageant—he thought not of the gore and carnage of the battle-field.

Happily for him, his father destined him for a learned profession. Filial obedience was a pleasure to the lad, so, without a regret, he gave himself to the ardent pursuit of the studies which his father marked out. His brother, the celebrated antiquarian and philo-



logist, Jeremiah James Oberlin, had then acquired considerable distinction at the university, and his success was a stimulant to him. A few years and the curriculum was passed through, and he was now of age to choose a profession. He made choice of the ministry. Dr. Lorentz, an eminent evangelical divine, a short time before he came to this determination, had been preaching in the city. Young Oberlin heard him. The gospel became more precious than ever, and he resolved to devote himself to its propagation. Soon after, he was admitted to "orders" in the Lutheran Church. But nothing could at that time induce him to undertake the *cure* of souls. Of the work in which he had engaged he had the clearest views. His was not an ambition to *preach*. The responsibilities of the Christian pastor were set before him, and he sought to prepare himself for their efficient discharge. When pressed to undertake a pastoral charge, his reply was, "I need more experience, more knowledge; at present I am not qualified. Moreover, I wish to labour where I can be



useful, not where I can be at ease." The key to his after life is to be found in this reply. Seven years elapsed, during which he diligently employed himself in the study of theology, supporting himself in the mean time by acting as tutor to the family of a distinguished surgeon of Strasburg, in whose house he acquired the knowledge of surgery and the healing art, which he afterwards turned to such good account in the Ban de la Roche.

Thus he continued teaching and studying until 1776, when the chaplaincy of a French regiment was offered to him. The "old drum" and the military associations of childhood were aroused up from the sleep of years. The chaplaincy, he thought, presented a prospect of extensive usefulness, so he decided to accept it. Accordingly he resigned his tutorship, took lodgings in the city, and commenced a preparatory course of reading.

About this period M. Stouber began his search after a pastor to succeed him in the Ban. Oberlin, whose piety, disinterested benevolence, and scholarly ability, had already



won him the esteem of his fellow-citizens, was mentioned to him as exactly such a man as he sought. Stouber came to Strasburg, and sought out Oberlin's lodgings. They were in a mean street; and when he reached the house he was directed to a little room up three pair of stairs. He opened the door, and the first thing that caught his eye was a small bed, covered with curtains made of—*brown paper!* He entered the apartment and approached the bed, and there he found Oberlin, racked with the agony of toothache. After some conversation, during which he rallied him upon the unique character of his bed-hangings and the poverty of his abode, he inquired the use of a little iron pan which he saw suspended above his table. "That," replied Oberlin, "is my kitchen. I am accustomed every day to dine at home with my parents, and they give me a large piece of bread to carry back with me in my pocket. At eight o'clock in the evening I put my bread into that pan; and, having sprinkled it with a little salt and water, I place my lamp be-



neath it, and go on with my studies until ten or eleven, when I generally begin to feel hungry, by which time my slice of bread is nicely cooked, and I relish it more than the choicest luxuries.”

Stouber was overjoyed while he listened. This was the very man for Steinthal. He declared the object of his visit, portrayed the condition of the people, their misery and ignorance, gave utterance to his own unfeigned sorrow at being obliged to leave them, and his fear, unless he could prevail upon him to occupy his post, that they must perish for lack of knowledge.

Oberlin's heart was touched. The place which Stouber described was just such a one as he had often pictured to himself as the scene of his pastorate. But, then, what could he do? his engagement with the regiment being all but finally concluded. He could not think of accepting charge of the Ban unless he was liberated from the chaplaincy, and, moreover, except there were before him no candidates for clerical preferment who would



accept M. Stouber's proposal. These obstacles were soon removed. The chaplaincy was speedily filled; but as the cure among the mountains presented "nor golden guerdon nor days of ease," for it there were no applicants. So Oberlin was free to become the pastor of the Ban de la Roche.

Previously to his departure for his parish, with a woman's foresight his mother saw that the happiness, as well as the usefulness, of her son would be promoted if he were to take a wife with him to the isolated and lonely district where he was about to reside. The subject was mentioned to him, but he did not see it in the same light as his parents. He had no attachment, he said; but if they wished him to marry it must be so, but theirs must be the task of selecting his companion. From time immemorial mothers have been match-makers. It is their province as well as their pleasure. All the sympathies of their nature are aroused when a son or daughter has to be "settled," as the phrase is. Whe-



ther or not this be the case with mothers in general, it certainly was so with Madame Oberlin in particular. John Frederic was her favourite, and he was not to be married to “anybody ;” and as he had no especial liking for any one, she did not see what harm it would do him if his wife were rich as well as devoted and amiable. Thus she reasoned, but she did not tell him what her cogitations were. Moreover, she had received a hint from the widow of a rich brewer—such a hint as only a *mother* can either get or give—that Oberlin was regarded with a gracious eye both by her daughter and herself, and that if he were to propose for the former it was extremely probable that his suit would be favourably received. Madame mentioned this to her son, but he was quite passive. He had no will in the matter, he said, but would do whatever she wished ; at the same time he would pray for divine guidance, and would abide the result. From his youth he was accustomed, whenever his judgment was perplexed with any matter, to pray to God to give him some intimation



of his will as to the course he should pursue. Some persons have harshly denounced this custom of Oberlin's as "a presumptuous and dangerous practice," but we think it neither one nor the other. If God be the moral governor of the world, the caretaker of all men, but especially of those who confide in him—if, in fine, the word of God be what we believe it is, namely, *one long encouragement to pray* for divine aid, surely, then, to seek that aid at all times, and particularly when in anxiety of mind, cannot be "dangerous," nor to expect a reply to our supplication be rationally deemed "presumptuous."

On this occasion Oberlin besought that God would be pleased to direct him in his choice, and to show him whether this union would be conducive to his usefulness in the ministry. "If," thought he, "the mother proposes the subject when I call upon her, then I shall take it as an indication of providential approbation; if not, I shall consider it my duty to entirely avoid it." Than this resolve nothing could possibly place his character in a clearer



light. He wishes his will to accord with God's. He desires to do only what would have the divine sanction. Here there is no mercenary game of profit and loss—no hankering after the wealth of the widow's daughter—no counting of the dowry. He thinks, but his thought is, will this marriage hinder or help me in my ministry? Reader, was not this a *true* man?

On the day appointed for the first visit, he hastened to the house where the lady dwelt. He was admitted. The mother, who had been apprised of his coming, was waiting to receive him, which she did most courteously. Mademoiselle, her daughter, was called down. They sat for a few moments, talked of the weather, and then came to a dead pause. They looked at each other—still the pause continued. At length Oberlin rose, retreated towards the door, made his bow, and departed, leaving the widow and her daughter to unridle the meaning of his visit. Thus ended Madame Oberlin's first plan for his "settlement in life."



One or two failures in such matters rarely discomfit a mother; this certainly did not discomfit Madame Oberlin. She wished her son to be happy, and how it was possible for him to be so without a good wife she could not imagine. Most of our fair readers, we opine, will say that in thinking thus she was right, and we confess we are not inclined to disagree with them. But to our history. A former tutor of Oberlin's had a daughter. She was a lady who, under the guise of amiability, nursed an ambitious soul, as the sequel will show. This defect in her character had escaped the observation of Oberlin, and for years she had a place in his esteem. Madame, his mother, being aware of this, suggested the propriety of his proposing to her. He had no objection, neither had the lady, nor had her parents. So far all seemed to go as smoothly as could be desired. A preliminary marriage contract was drawn up, but, alas! a wealthy suitor appeared on the scene. He made the lady an offer of his hand and—*purse*; and the latter being an article of



which Oberlin could not boast, she (disinterested creature!) broke with the poor pastor, and accepted her rich admirer. Whether she, in her turn, was jilted by the man of cash, we know not, although we suspect as much; for a few weeks after her father intimated his desire to Oberlin that the connection should be renewed. On the receipt of the note, Oberlin at once proceeded to the schoolmaster's residence, and, handing his note back to him, he said, "My dear sir, I am accustomed to follow the intimations of Providence, and I consider what has recently occurred as a warning that a union with your daughter would neither promote her happiness nor mine. Let us, therefore, say no more about it—forget what has passed—and let me, as of old, share in your affection."

Here ended the endeavours of good Madame Oberlin to secure a wife for her son, and so she was obliged to consent to his departure "unwived," which was no slight trial to her. Nevertheless, he must not go alone. She ac-



accompanied him to Waldbach, and after arranging his little establishment, she bade him adieu, leaving with him his younger sister, Sophia, who took charge of his household. Pastor Stouber introduced him to the parishioners; and in April, 1767, in the twenty-seventh year of his age, Oberlin became pastor of the Ban de la Roche. About a year after this event had taken place, a lady of highly cultivated mind and agreeable disposition came to Waldbach on a visit to Sophia. Her name was Madeline, and she was the orphan daughter of Professor Witter of Strasburg. She soon relieved Sophia of her cares as her brother's housekeeper; for, despite of a long-cherished determination never to marry a clergyman, Madeline Witter became the wife of Oberlin. A more judicious choice it was impossible to make. She was the sharer of his trials and his joys. Her prudence and foresight balanced and controlled his enthusiastic disposition; her devoted piety, which led her to fully participate in his anxiety to pro-



mote the welfare of his people, cheered him when desponding, and heightened his joy when successful. In fine, she was what every wife should be to an affectionate and virtuous husband, a "helpmate."



## CHAPTER III.

WE approach the testing time—the time of the development of the character of Oberlin. The pastorate, when viewed from the study or the divinity hall, even by the most devoted and intelligent of men, presents a very different aspect to what it does when seen from the centre of its weighty and solemn engagements. The student, although he knows much, and thinks, mayhap, that he knows more of the “cure of souls” than many who are occupied in the work, in reality sees only the husk, the outside. The core lies beyond his “ken.” He must become a pastor before he can possibly pronounce a correct judgment upon the trials or the encouragements of those who are engaged in the ministry of the gospel. Moreover, until actually in the harness, the divinity



student is incapable of judging of his own fitness for the pastorate. There may be piety—sincere, deep, ardent piety—without which no man *can* preach “the glorious gospel of the blessed God”—there may be high scholarship, painstaking assiduity, tenderness of heart, and amiability of disposition, and yet the young man who possesses all these, although capable of filling a chair of philosophy or theology, may utterly fail as a pastor. Numerous cases in point will readily occur to the memory of our readers. We know several ourselves, who, in their own opinion and that of their most discerning friends, were certain to succeed, who, when they closed the first three years (and many at the end of one year), found that they had mistaken their vocation. Those men did not lack the most earnest desire that their fellow-creatures should be brought to a “saving acquaintance” with divine truth—they were, in the highest sense of the word, “earnest” ministers, yet they failed, and, what is more, they knew it, which, unhappily, is not always the case. And



this leads us, by the way, to notice the fundamental error of an otherwise excellent work, the production of that model pastor, John Angel James; we allude to the "Earnest Ministry the Want of the Times." We believe—and our belief is founded upon a wide induction of facts—that the great defect in the evangelical ministry of the present day is not that which Mr. James mentions. There is abundance of "earnestness," but a deplorable want of "adaptation"—*adaptation* to the *age* in which they live, to the *country* in which they dwell, to the *place* in which they labour. Earnestness there may be, but unless there be adaptation, the ministry will be anything but what it ought to be—the guide and beacon-light of fallen man.

We say, then, that the testing time had come to Oberlin. He was now a pastor and a husband. His wife, one of the best of women; his flock, wretched, ignorant, scattered—a prey to laziness and hunger—without the merest necessities of life, and contented to remain so. Let us, then, look at what this



young man possessed that his hopes should be so strong of turning this wilderness into "a garden of God." What had he?—wealth? No, not a stiver; but he had that which wealth could not, *cannot* purchase—an earnest, devoted, loving heart, a thoughtful and well-disciplined mind, considerable scientific skill and practical ability, a natural and suasive eloquence which at once won its way to the heart, habits of self-denial, of promptitude, of perseverance, and a joyous willingness to endure all things, if by so doing he could promote the glory of God and the good of mankind. That such a man should accomplish what he did is to us no marvel. It would have been miraculous, indeed, if he had failed.

When he had gone over the parish, he saw that Stouber's picture of its degraded state was by no means too highly coloured, and he felt that all his resources would be taxed if he sought to effect any change for the better. His quick mind at once perceived the connection which existed between their physical



misery and their moral degradation; so he immediately began to devise plans to promote their civilization. His first was to bring them into contact with the inhabitants of the neighbouring towns, rightly judging that the comfort and cleanliness and intelligence, which they would behold in those places, would present such a strong contrast to the state of things in the Steinthal, as at once to beget a desire in their minds for improvement. But how was he to move? All the roads connected with the parish were literally impassable during the greater portion of the year, in consequence of land-slips which completely blocked them, or their being torn up by the rushing down of the mountain torrents during the winter. The people thus shut in could neither find a market for their produce, nor obtain agricultural implements which they required. There was but one way to effect the desired change. He had made a careful survey of the parish, and the result was a determination to open up a communication with the high-road to Strasburg; but to do this it



would be necessary to blast the rocks and to construct a solid wall to support a road, which he proposed to carry for about a mile and a half along the banks of a deep mountain-stream called the Bruche, and then, at Rothau, to build a bridge across it. He called his parishioners together, and announced his project. They were astonished. "He was mad," they said. "The thing was utterly impracticable. They had thought for some time that there was something strange about him, but now they were sure he was downright insane." Thus they thought and said, and one and all began to excuse themselves from having any share in what they deemed such a wild and foolish undertaking. But Oberlin pressed the matter upon them, refuted their objections respecting the impossibility of accomplishing his plan, pointed out the manifest and numerous advantages which would result from it, both to themselves and to their children, and wound up his harangue by shouldering a pick-axe and exclaiming, "Let those who see the importance of what I have stated come and



work with me !” The effect was electric. Opposition gave way to cheerful acquiescence and the most unbounded enthusiasm. He appointed to each man a certain task. He soon had more helpers than he could find tools for. The news of his undertaking reached Strasburg, and implements and funds were sent to him. Rocks were undermined and blasted; torrents, which had overspread and inundated the meadows, were guided into channels which had been cut to receive them; where the land threatened to slip, walls were built to sustain it; the road was completed to Rothau; at that place he threw a neat wooden bridge across the Bruche, which to this day is called *Le Pont de Charité*. The whole was finished, and a communication opened up with Strasburg, in 1770, about a year and a half after his marriage.

Some will ask, how fared it with his duties as a religious teacher all this time? Did he neglect them? No; on the contrary, like the great apostle of the Gentiles—who thought it not beneath him to make tents during the



week—Oberlin, who on week-days headed his people in their arduous task, on the Sabbath directed them with equal zeal and earnestness to “the rest which remaineth for the people of God.” The immediate effect of the success of his scheme was the gaining of almost unbounded influence over his parishioners. They no longer regarded him as a madman, but as the only wise one among them. They now cheerfully engaged in any work which he devised, and, very soon, convenient and necessary roads traversed the Steinthal, and connected the various villages. While he was tutor in M. Ziegenhagen’s family in Strasburg, he became intimately acquainted with botanical science, and acquired not merely that knowledge which enables the empiric to classify and denominate, but he understood the *properties* of almost every plant, and could at once tell you whether it could be used as food or medicine. This knowledge he at once turned to account. He introduced the culture of several leguminous plants and herbs; imported seed from Riga and raised



flax; introduced Dutch clover; taught the farmers the use of manure, to make composts, to improve the growth of the potato, which had so far degenerated that fields which had formerly yielded from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and fifty bushels, now yielded only about thirty or fifty, which the people imputed to the sterility of the soil, instead of their own neglect. His success was most unequivocal, and the consequence was the augmentation of the resources of the Steinthal. As an example of the manner in which he was wont to connect all those efforts for the temporal welfare with the spiritual instruction of his people, we would direct our reader's attention to the following characteristic incident. Although he had been so successful in the affair of the road-making, and in the introduction of an improved style of husbandry, still among the parishioners there was a hankering after "old fashions," and for the life of them, they could not understand how it was that he who never dug, or ploughed, or owned an acre of land in his life, should



know more about the management of fields and cattle than they did. Oberlin's sagacity at once discovered this, and so, when he wished to make any improvement, or to introduce any new kind of plant, or vegetable, or tree, he began in his own garden, and when the curiosity of the people was excited, he detailed to them the name of the root, the object he had in cultivating it, the mode to be observed in its culture, etc., until he had thoroughly instructed them, and kindled a desire in their minds to imitate him. There was scarcely a fruit-tree worth a groat for miles around, and there were few gardens which grew anything but the most luxuriant weeds. To talk about the matter Oberlin knew would be quite useless, so he betook himself to his old plan of teaching by example. He had a servant who was an intelligent and devoted man; they took counsel together. There were two gardens belonging to the parsonage, each of which was crossed by a well-frequented thoroughfare. One of these gardens had been noted for years for



the poverty and sterility of its soil ; this he determined to convert into a nursery-ground ! Trenches, accordingly, were dug, and the land laid out ; slips of walnut, apple, plum, and pear trees were planted. In due time the trees blossomed, and when the period of fruitage came, the crop was abundant. The plan, as Oberlin anticipated, succeeded admirably. Week after week the villagers were wont to pause, and wonder how trees could grow in such a soil. Then they began to contrast the appearance of their pastor's garden with their own ; and *then* they came to him in crowds, begging that he would be kind enough to instruct them how to grow trees for themselves. The object he sought was accomplished. According to his accustomed mode, he first directed their thoughts to Him who causeth the earth to bring forth her bud, and who crowneth the year with his goodness, and then gave them the desired information. To aid them, he gave them a supply of young trees from his nursery, and instructed them in the art of grafting. The consequence was,



that in a little time the whole district changed its aspect; the bare and desolate-looking cottages were speedily surrounded by neat little gardens, and instead of the indigence and misery which formerly characterized the villagers and their dwellings, they now put on the garb of rural beauty and happiness. So rapid were the advances which the people made under his direction, that, in 1778, Oberlin formed an Agricultural Society, which he connected with the central society at Strasburg. By doing so, he secured the use of the Society's publications and periodicals, and received its assistance in the distribution of the prizes, which were annually awarded to the peasants who distinguished themselves in the grafting and culture of fruit-trees, and in rearing or improving the breed of cattle. The Strasburg Society, as a testimony of its sense of the advantages which Oberlin's labours had bestowed upon the people, placed two hundred francs at his disposal, to be distributed among such agriculturists as he might deem worthy of a prize. He soon began to reap



the fruit of his toil. Everywhere around him civilization and the power of the gospel made themselves manifest. With the improvement of their physical condition, their moral advancement went hand in hand, till at length, in the district around, and in the towns and cities of the basin of the Rhine, few things awakened more astonishment or attracted so much attention as the remarkable change which had taken place in the people, and the no less remarkable character of the pastor of the Ban de la Roche.



## CHAPTER IV.

To Oberlin belongs the merit of being the founder of Infant-schools ; a fact which justly entitles him to the gratitude of mankind. When he took the cure of the Ban in 1767, there was but one school-house in the five villages, and that was a hut erected by Pastor Stouber, which then was in a ruinous state. He called the parishioners together, and proposed that they should either build a new one or repair the hut. They gave a decided negative to his proposition, nor would they again listen to him on the subject, until he engaged that no part of the expense should fall on the funds of the parish. His income, arising from his salary as pastor, and his little property, did not amount to more than about forty pounds a-year ; nevertheless, he gave



the required promise, and the school-house was built. "Why should I hesitate in this matter?" said he; "I seek only the glory of God, and therefore I have confidence that he will grant me what I desire. If we ask in faith, and it be really right that the thing should take place, our prayer is certain to be granted. When, indeed, are our plans more likely to be successful than when we enter upon them in humble and simple dependence upon God, whose blessing alone can cause them to succeed?" Thus Oberlin reasoned, and time proved that he reasoned aright. God *did* grant his prayer. His fast friends at Strasburg, who watched his progress with anxiety, came to his help; and further, in the course of a few years, the inhabitants in the other four villages voluntarily proposed that a school should be built in each, of which they would cheerfully bear all the expense! And so they did. The young are the hope of the world. The men and women of the next generation will be what the children of the present are. The future is only the develop-



ment of the present; "the child is father to the man." Oberlin instinctively knew what Wordsworth wrote; consequently, as the sequel will show, he directed all his energies to the instruction of the young of his flock. The habits of the adults might be modified, but not eradicated. The men were as ignorant of the commonest mechanical arts, as their wives were of domestic economy or home comfort. They had passed their learning time. Not so, however, with their children. So Oberlin selected the most promising, and sent them to Strasburg, to acquire the trades of mason, carpenter, glazier, wheelwright, and blacksmith. When they returned to the Ban, they became the instructors of others. Their earnings increased the little treasuries of the district, while their skill accelerated its improvements.

The schools which were erected were devoted to the use of children from the age of ten to seventeen. The shepherd-masters, who, poor fellows! played the "dominie" under the old system, were cashiered, and



the most respectable of the inhabitants were prevailed upon to take their places under the imposing title of "regents." The plans of instruction were drawn up, and the "regents" drilled in the science of education by Oberlin. While the schools were working well under his careful superintendence, he noticed that the *infant* children were almost wholly neglected by their parents, and were therefore forming habits which in after years would increase the task of the schoolmaster, if not altogether nullify his labour. His active mind at once devised a remedy for the evil. The result was a plan for the establishment of Infant-schools—the first of the kind ever known. Experience of his own family and keen observation in the families of others, led him to the conclusion that children begin to learn even in the cradle, that at the earliest age they are capable of being taught the difference between right and wrong, and are easily trained to habits of obedience and industry. His beloved and intelligent wife entered heart and soul into his views. The most pious and in-



telligent females of the community were induced to take charge of the schools. For their use, Oberlin rented a large room in each village, and out of his own pocket paid the salary of the *conductresses*. The instruction given to the little ones was mingled with amusement, and habits of attention and subordination were formed, while information of the most valuable kind was communicated in a manner which rendered it attractive to the infant mind. The songs of "dear mamma" had left too deep and hallowed an influence upon Oberlin's mind, to cause him to overlook the value of music in the instruction of youth. Singing was taught in all the schools. The heart-thrilling hymns of Luther became especial favourites among the children and young people. At a proper age the children were transferred from the care of the conductress to the public schools, prepared, by the progress which they had made, to enjoy the advantages which were there afforded to them. In addition to reading, writing, arithmetic, and geography, they were carefully instructed



in the principles of agriculture and other industrial arts, in sacred and uninspired history, and in astronomy. Their religious cultivation was a task which Oberlin considered his own, and faithfully did he fulfil it. With the view of encouraging the spirit of emulation between the several schools, and to improve the modes of instruction pursued by the various masters, a weekly meeting of all the scholars was held at Waldbach. By this the machinery of the whole was kept bright and in good working order. The master and the pupils were stimulated, knowing that the weekly meeting would bring disgrace to the idle, but to the industrious and good public commendation, and the approval of "dear papa," as Oberlin was called by his people. In addition to this weekly examination, on every Sabbath, at each village church in rotation, the children assembled to sing the hymns and to repeat the passages of Scripture which they had learned during the week. At the close, he usually gave them an address; and superlatively happy was the child or young person



who was fortunate enough to merit the approving smile of *dear papa!*

His benevolent efforts were well seconded by the Christians of Strasburg. They sent him several sums of money, all of which were devoted by him to the public use. A printing press was added to the resources of the Ban. This enabled him to print several books which he composed and compiled for the exclusive use of the schools and his parishioners, and to award prizes both to the teachers and pupils. He also made a collection of indigenous plants, and procured an electrical machine, and several other philosophical instruments; various works on natural history and general science were circulated on the "book society" plan, each village retaining them for three months, care being taken that every house, according to the number of the family, possessed them for a definite time. Every individual was impressed with the conviction that it was a first duty, as well as a great privilege, to promote the glory of God and the welfare of mankind. Every work



which was undertaken of a public or private nature was discharged, each one bearing in mind his responsibility to promote the prosperity of all, by “provoking his neighbour to love and to good works.” Thus the Ban was changed. Where ignorance and its never-failing attendants, cruelty, vice, poverty, reigned supreme, piety, intelligence, meekness, and plenty, held triumphant sway.

Little more than fifty years ago, the Christians of this country were almost indifferent to the state of the heathen. Until the London Missionary Society was established, in September, 1795, very little interest was manifested in the cause of missions. The following copy of a paper which Oberlin caused to be printed in French and German, and hung up in a conspicuous place in every cottage in his parish, serves to indicate how early the subject occupied his mind, and how desirous he was to enlist in its favour the affections of his people:—

“Our Lord Jesus Christ desired his followers to espouse his interests; to aid him in his



great work, and to pray in his name. To conduce to this end, he has himself furnished them with one common prayer.

“For the satisfaction and assistance of some individuals amongst us, a sort of Spiritual Association was established a few years ago, and the following articles were agreed upon and circulated :—

“First, Every member of this society shall pray, on the first Monday of every month, that the missionaries employed in the conversion of savage and idolatrous nations in all parts of the world may be sustained and supported against the ‘wiles of the Devil.’

“Secondly, Besides habitually ‘watching unto prayer,’ every individual, if he be able, shall prostrate himself in mind and body, every Sunday and Wednesday at five o’clock in the evening, to ask of God, in the name of Christ—

“1st, That every member of this Society may be saved, with all his household, and belong to the Lord Jesus Christ.

“2nd, Every member shall add to the list



all the friends of God of his acquaintance, and pray for them.

“3rd, Every member shall include in his prayer all the children of God in general, upon all the earth, of whatever denomination they may be, supplicating that they may be united more and more in Christ Jesus.

“4th, Every member shall pray that the kingdom of Satan may be destroyed, and that the kingdom of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ may be fully established among the innumerable Pagans, Turks, Jews, and nominal Christians.

“5th, Every member shall pray for schoolmasters, superiors, and pious magistrates of whatever name or rank they may be.

“6th, For faithful pastors, male and female labourers in the vineyard of the Lord Jesus, who, being devoted themselves to his service, desire above all things to bring many other souls to him.

“7th, For the young, that God may preserve them from the seducing influence of bad



example, and lead them to the knowledge of our gracious Redeemer.

“Thirdly, Every Saturday evening, all the members shall ask God to bless the preaching of his holy word on the morrow.”

Here there is every thing *Christian*, but nothing *sectarian*. His loving heart embraced in its affections the whole Church of God, and this catholic Christian wished his flock to be like-minded with himself. Without either seeking, or desiring it, he obtained an almost European celebrity. Several foreigners of distinction visited the Ban, and confided their children to his care to be educated in his schools. Young persons, of the middle classes, were sent to him from distant parts of Germany and France; and to have been a pupil of Pastor Oberlin was considered a sufficient testimonial of sound principles, varied and useful learning, and courteous and gentle manners. Even the wicked revered this good man. During the Reign of Terror, when France was deluged with the blood of her children—when to be a worshipper of



God was to be suspected of treachery to the principles of the Revolution—when St. Just and his companions in crime travelled with a guillotine, and put whom they pleased to death—when the public worship of God was prohibited, and almost every man of piety or intelligence or wealth was either imprisoned or executed—Oberlin was allowed to continue his work unmolested, and even to afford shelter to many persons of rank and of different religious denominations, who fled to the Ban from the “terrorists.” Such was the impression which his life made upon all that came in contact with him, that a gentleman who, at this very time, saw at his house one of the most sanguinary of the revolutionary chiefs, says that “that chief while at Oberlin’s seemed to have lost his bloodthirsty disposition, and to have exchanged the fierceness of the tiger for the gentleness of the lamb !”

All that knew him loved him. His worth was acknowledged not only by those who were far off. Louis XVIII. sent him the ribbon of the Legion of Honour, and the Royal



Agricultural Society of France voted him a gold medal. When Count François de Neufchâteau proposed this vote, he said, "If you would behold an instance of what may be effected in any country for the advancement of agriculture and the interests of humanity, friends of the plough and of human happiness, ascend the Vosges Mountains, and behold the Ban de la Roche!" At the time of the foundation of the British and Foreign Bible Society, his fame had spread into Britain; and one of the first grants made by the society was to Pastor Oberlin for the inhabitants of the Ban. It was there that our "Ladies' Bible Committees" originated; and those of our readers who are fortunate enough to possess the first report of the society will find in the appendix an exquisite letter from Oberlin, in which he acknowledges the receipt of the grant, and details the mode in which he intends to appropriate it.



## CHAPTER V.

WE approach the conclusion. We have given a glimpse of the labours of this faithful servant of God and of man to our readers ; we now call them to view him in his sorrows, and accompany him to the grave.

His heaviest trial, though not his first, was the loss of his wife. She died in January, 1784, in the sixteenth year of their union. She departed almost suddenly, leaving him seven, out of nine, children, the youngest being only about ten weeks old. Nothing could be more characteristic than his conduct on this distressing occasion. Her death was wholly unlooked for. When the intelligence was brought to him, he was stunned, and remained for some time in silence, quite incapable of giving utterance to his feelings. He



then fell on his knees and returned "thanks to God that his beloved partner was now beyond the reach or need of prayer, and that her heavenly Father had crowned the abundance of his mercies towards her, by giving her so easy a departure." At their marriage they had prayed that they might always have death before their eyes, and always be prepared for it; and "if it be a thing," they added, "which we may ask of thee, oh! grant that we be not long separated one from another, but that the death of one may speedily, very speedily, follow that of the other." From the period of his wife's death a deepened seriousness was observable in his conversation and deportment. He was grave, not gloomy. A word of repining or murmuring never escaped his lips. It was the Lord's doing, and it was right. About six months after he had laid her in the grave, he composed an address to his parishioners, and laid it aside, to be delivered to them after his decease, as his last charge. In this document he briefly states when and where he was born, when he took



charge of the Ban, the time of his marriage, the number of his children, "two of whom," he said, "have already entered paradise, and seven remain in this world;" he also names the day and the circumstances in which his wife died.

"Upon this occasion," he goes on to say, "as upon a thousand others in the course of my life, notwithstanding my overwhelming affliction, I was upheld by God's gracious assistance in a very remarkable manner. I have had all my life a desire, occasionally a very strong one, to die, owing in some measure to the consciousness of my moral infirmities and of my frequent derelictions. My affection for my wife and children, and my attachment to my parish, have sometimes checked this desire, though for short intervals only. I had, about a year since, some presentiment of my approaching end. I did not pay much attention to it at the time; but, since the death of my wife, I have frequently received unequivocal warnings of the same nature. Millions of times have I besought God to enable me to



surrender myself with entire and filial submission to his will, either to live or die, and to bring me into such a state of resignation as neither to wish, nor to say, nor to do, nor to undertake any thing, but what He, who only is wise and good, sees to be best. Having had such frequent intimations of my approaching end, I have arranged all my affairs as far as I am able, in order to prevent confusion after my death. For my dear children I fear nothing; but as I always greatly preferred being useful to others to giving them trouble, I suffer much from the idea that they may occasion sorrow or anxiety to the friends who take charge of them. May God abundantly reward them for it! With regard to the children themselves I have no anxiety; for I have had such frequent experience of the mercy of God towards myself, and place such full reliance upon his goodness, his wisdom, and his love, as to render it impossible for me to be at all solicitous about them. Their mother was at a very early age deprived of her parents; but she was, notwithstanding, a better Chris-



tian than thousands who have enjoyed the advantage of parental instruction. Besides, I know that God hears our prayers, and ever since the birth of our children neither their mother nor I have ceased to supplicate him to make them faithful followers of Jesus Christ, and labourers in his vineyard. And thou, O my dear parish! neither will God forsake thee. He has towards thee, as I have often said, thoughts of peace and mercy. All things will go well with thee; only cleave thou to him, and leave him to act. Oh! mayest thou forget my name, and retain only that of Jesus Christ, whom I have proclaimed to thee. *He* is thy pastor; I am but his servant. He is that good Master who, after having trained and prepared me from my youth, sent me to thee that I might be useful. He alone is wise, good, almighty, and merciful; and as for me, I am but a poor, feeble, wretched man." . . . This touching document concludes thus:—"O my God! let thine eye watch over my dear parishioners; let thine ear be open to hear them; thine arm



be extended to succour and protect them! Lord Jesus, thou hast entrusted this parish to my care feeble and miserable as I am; oh! suffer me to commend it to thee—to resign it into thy hands. Give it pastors after thine own heart; never forsake it; overrule all things for its good! Enlighten them, guide them, love them, bless them all; and grant that the young and old, the teachers and the taught, pastors and parishioners, may all in due time meet together in thy paradise! Even so, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit! Even so, Amen.”

Forty-two years after this parting address was written, it was found among his papers, and was read in the churchyard, to his assembled people, before his body was lowered down into the grave. Those forty-two years were spent, like those that preceded them, in unremitting attention to the instruction of his flock. The death of his sons, which took place when they had attained the age of manhood, seemed only to quicken his diligence, and to deepen his solicitude respecting the



eternal welfare of his charge. The apostolic injunction came with power to his heart—he was “instant in season and out of season,” and always “fervent in spirit.” He did not content himself with preaching publicly, but paid pastoral visits to every cottage in his large parish, and conversed with the people upon their spiritual condition, and upon the various efforts which were made by benevolent individuals to diffuse religious knowledge throughout the world. On every Friday he conducted a service in German, for the benefit of about two hundred persons in the Ban, to whom that language was more familiar than the French. At his Friday evening service he used to lay aside all form, and the now silvery-headed old man seemed more like a father surrounded by his children than the minister of an extensive district. At those meetings, in order that no time might be lost, he used to make his female hearers knit stockings for their poorer neighbours, not for themselves; it was a work of charity, he said, and needed not to either distract their atten-



tion or to diminish their devotion. When he had for some time read and expounded the Bible to them, he would often say, "Well, children, are you not tired? Have you had enough?" If they said, "Enough for one time," he would leave off; but the more frequent reply was, "No, dear papa, go on; we should like to hear a little more!" His discourses for the Sabbath were carefully prepared. In them he preserved a colloquial plainness, scrupulously avoiding the use of words or phrases which were not level to the apprehension of his hearers. He drew largely upon natural history, with which his people were well acquainted, for illustration; and he frequently introduced biographical anecdotes of persons who were eminent for piety or benevolence. His favourite themes were the love of God as our Father, the freeness of the gospel, the willingness of the Lord Jesus to receive all who came to him in sincerity, the depravity of man, and the consequent necessity of grace and of the work of the Holy Spirit, and the sure efficacy of prayer.



Among the people he also circulated a series of questions to which he required written replies—whether they attended church regularly upon the Sabbath and week days, or ever passed a Sabbath without employing themselves in some charitable work, or themselves or their children wandered in the woods during the hours of divine service. “Do you,” he asked, “send your children regularly to school? Do you watch over them as God requires that you should do? Is your conduct towards them, as well as your wife’s, such as will ensure their affection, respect, and obedience? Are you careful to provide yourselves with clean and suitable clothes for going to church in? Do those who are so provided employ a regular part of their income in procuring such clothes for their destitute neighbours or in relieving their other necessities? Do you give your creditors reason to be satisfied with your honesty and punctuality? When the magistrate wishes to assemble the community, do you always assist him as far as lies in your power? and if it be impossible for



you to attend, are you careful to inform him of your absence, and to assign a proper reason for it? Do the animals which belong to you cause no injury or inconvenience to others? Guard against this, for it would be as fire in tow, and a source of mutual vexation. Do not keep a dog, unless there be an absolute necessity for keeping one. Do you punctually contribute your share toward repairing the roads? Have you, in order to advance the general good, planted upon the common at least twice as many trees as there are heads in your family? Have you planted them properly, or only as idle people do, to save themselves trouble? Are you frugal in the use of wood, and do you make your fires in as economical a manner as possible? Have you proper drains in your yard for carrying off the refuse water? Are you, as well as your sons, acquainted with some little handicraft, to employ your spare moments, instead of letting them pass away in idleness?" These questions clearly manifest that every thing calculated to promote the welfare of his people was



interesting to him. The result of his solicitous care was seen in the neat dwellings, the industrious character, the sincere, unaffected piety, and the courteous manners of the peasants of the Ban de la Roche.

Numerous anecdotes, illustrative of Oberlin's pastoral fidelity and vigilance, crowd upon us, but we must forego the pleasure of recording them here, and hasten to the conclusion of this sketch.

The close of his earthly career was, like that of a summer day, calm and peaceful. His sun set in glory. His was not a *death*, but a *departure*. The light of his presence faded gently away from this world, only to burst in glorious refulgence and undying splendor upon another ! His was a green old age. The snows of time, although they rested upon his head, sent no chill into the warm affections of his heart. In the latter part of his life, the increasing infirmities of age prevented him from occupying himself, as he was wont, in the discharge of his pastoral duty. God, however, provided him an assistant like-



minded with himself, in his devoted son-in-law, M. Graff. The old man did what he could. If he could not visit nor preach to his flock, he could pray for them: so in the morning he used to take his church register of baptisms in his hand, and to pray, at stated times during the day, for every one whose name was written there, as well as for the community at large. At all periods of his residence in the Ban, Oberlin had a high sense of the value and importance of intercessory prayer; and so fearful was he lest he should omit in his supplications any that he wished to especially remember, that he was accustomed to write their names with chalk upon the black door of his chamber. As his failing strength prevented him from crossing the threshold, his active mind engaged with an almost youthful vigour in the labours of the study. Several carefully composed essays, written at this time, were found after his decease. His last work was a refutation of Cicero's essay on Old Age; in which he gives a more cheering and consola-



tory picture of old age than the Roman orator has done.

The sand was now low in the glass. The last grain ran out on the morning of the 1st of June, 1826, when he was in the eighty-sixth year of his age. The illness which preceded his departure continued for four days. On the morning of the 1st of June, at six o'clock, his pain abated. His children were grouped around his bed, and at intervals he clasped their hands and pressed them to his heart. His limbs soon became cold and lifeless, and he lost the use of his speech. His last act was to take off his cap, and to join his hands as in prayer, and to raise his eyes toward heaven; his countenance as he did so beaming with joy and love. He closed his eyes, never to open them again until the day of the resurrection. About eleven o'clock the toll of the passing-bell informed the inhabitants of the valley, that he who had watched over them for nearly sixty years would watch no more.

Four days afterwards he was buried. Dur-



ing the interval which elapsed between his decease, and the simple and affecting ceremony which consigned his remains to the grave, heavy clouds rested on the surrounding mountains, and the rain poured down in incessant torrents. Nature seemed to sympathize with the feelings which swelled the hearts of his people, and which bowed their souls with the sincerest sorrow. Oberlin's remains were placed in a coffin with a glass lid, and laid in his study, where, despite of the inclemency of the weather, the inhabitants of the Ban and of the surrounding districts (of all ages, conditions, and religious denominations) congregated to take a farewell look at his beloved face.

Early in the morning of the day fixed for the interment, the clouds cleared away and the sun shone with its wonted brilliancy. As the procession left the house, the president of the consistory of Barr, the Rev. M. Jaeglé, placed Oberlin's clerical robes upon the coffin, the vice-president of the consistory placed his Bible upon it, and the mayor affixed the deco-



ration of the Legion of Honour to the funeral pall. At the conclusion of this ceremony, ten or twelve young females, who had been standing round the bier, began to sing a hymn, and at two o'clock the procession began to move, the coffin being borne by the mayors, elders, and official magistrates of the Ban and of the neighbouring communes.

The region round about seemed to have sent forth all its inhabitants, so great was the concourse which assembled. The interment took place at Foudai, two miles distant from Oberlin's house, but the foremost of the funeral train had reached the churchyard before the last had left the parsonage! The children and youths of the different schools formed part of the melancholy procession, chanting at intervals sacred hymns, selected and adapted to the occasion. When they approached Foudai, a new bell, which had been presented in commemoration of this day of sorrow, was heard to toll for the first time, and to mingle its melancholy sound with the bells of the valley. The burying-ground was



surrounded by Roman Catholic women, all dressed in deep mourning and kneeling in silent prayer. On arriving at the church, the coffin was placed at the foot of the communion-table, and as many persons entered as the little place would contain, the great multitude having to remain in the churchyard and the adjoining lanes. Notwithstanding the presence of so great a number of persons, the utmost order and solemnity prevailed. Several persons, who could find room nowhere else, sat down on the steps beside the coffin, as if anxious to cling to the ashes of one whom they loved so well. Many distinguished persons were present, and several Roman Catholic priests, dressed in their canonicals, sat among the members of the consistory, and evidently shared in the general grief. M. Jaeglé then mounted the pulpit and read the charge, which melted the vast auditory into tears; and then he delivered a discourse from the fourteenth verse of the seventh chapter of the book of Revelations, which had been selected by Oberlin himself as that from which



his funeral sermon was to be preached. At the conclusion of the president's address, a hymn was sung, and the coffin borne to the grave, which is on one side of the little church, beneath a weeping willow that shades the tomb of his son Henry. Here, amidst the tears of the assembled thousands, the earth was heaped upon the house of clay which once contained the spirit of Oberlin, the world's benefactor, while the humble and Christ-like pastor of the Ban de la Roche.

Reader, do you wish to die as he died? If so, live as he lived; and your memory, like his, will be green and fragrant throughout all ages.

A translation of one of the hymns that were sung in his church.

O Lord, thy heavenly grace impart,  
And fix my frail, inconstant heart;  
Henceforth my chief desire shall be,  
To dedicate myself to thee!  
To thee, my God, to thee!



Whate'er pursuits my time employ,  
One thought shall fill my soul with joy ;  
That silent, sacred thought shall be,  
That all my hopes are fixed on thee !  
On thee, my God, on thee !

Thy glorious eye pervadeth space,  
Thou'rt present, Lord, in every place ;  
And wheresoe'er my lot may be,  
Still shall my spirit cleave to thee !  
To thee, my God, to thee !

Renouncing every worldly thing,  
Safe, 'neath the shelter of thy wing,  
My sweetest thought henceforth shall be,  
That all I want I find in thee !  
In thee, my God, in thee !



















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